

[P. 92b] Western Mono NS25

Musical Instruments

Y
534 All informants agree that no drum of any type was used by the Yokuts or, for that matter, by the Western Mono. The foot drum of the Miwok was known, and was referred to as pu'mpum.

M
[534] A whistle (pu'sac) of eagle leg bone was used by doctors and by the huhuna dancer.

Y
198 Ordinary whistling as Europeans know it was not indulged in, but instead a kind of "humming through the front teeth" was practiced. Some women did this, but mostly men while working at odd jobs (J.P.). This "whistling" was called šiš: k'neta; perhaps was a sort of hissing.

Y
534 The flute (u'toi 'i) was of elder wood, averaging about eighteen inches long. It was end-blown, but was held at the right side of the mouth, not centered, at an angle of about 45° below horizontal (S.G.). The flute was reedless and had four holes.²²¹ A frequent custom for men was to nap at home or in the sweat house, during a rain and, on awakening, to play the flute.

A clapper (ta'ow:d) of elder wood was used for ordinary pleasure dances such as the wati-yod, whereas the cocoon rattle (sa'hač) was used only for serious performances like the Bear Dance.

534
237 The cocoons used for rattles were those of the ceanothus silk moth which infested the oak trees of the roblar and chaparral of the foothills. The cocoon was carefully freed from its moorings, a twig inserted into one end and then held close to glowing coals to singe off the "silk" and kill the pupa within. At this time the cocoon shell was soft, and was pressed about the twig, being wrapped and held in place by a bit of sinew string. The cocoon was left in the sun until the pupa had become thoroughly dried and, shrunken to a hard small mass, rattled about inside. Pebbles were sometimes inserted. Two to four such cocoons were then tied onto a little handle about six inches long.²²²

Deer-hoof rattles were not used, but the hoofs were sewed around the edge of women's deerakin aprons where "they made a pretty noise" (M.L.). This informant claimed a rattle made of deer hide and pebbles was used for the Bear Dance.

Tobacco

276
249 Tobacco (šo'gen) grew all through the foothills. Any person who wished to might pre-

²²¹Illustrated by Kroeber, *ibid.*, pl. 43, b. Although Kroeber states that the "holes were commonly four, grouped in pairs, but without definite rule as to relation of distance" (p. 509) it appears that the 4-holed flutes (pl. 43) have spacings roughly constant in relation to each other and the total length of the instrument.

²²²Illustrated by Kroeber, *ibid.*, fig. 37, a.

CP. 1206] Wukchumi

796 band, etc. The singer accompanist, who was
 [534] also a person with Bear totem, sat at one side
 [557] and used a cocoon rattle. The dancers stood in
 [198] a row, with the most powerful or important man
 [516] at the right end, the woman at the left (from
 the audience's point of view). The men held
 their hands cupped to their mouths to augment
 their heavily aspirated grunts. The woman held
 her hands beside her shoulders, wide open,
 palms forward, and her elbows close to her
 sides. While the accompanist sang and rattled,
 the dancers turned toward their left, and the
 796 men, with feet together, took three slow, stiff
 535 jumps forward. At each jump they exhaled a
 harsh, hard "Xo'! xo'! xo'!" The woman remained
 in her place and, with feet together and heels
 off the ground, moved herself rhythmically with
 a gentle bouncing-springing motion on the balls
 of her feet. The upper part of her body and
 her shoulders she turned to right and left on
 alternate "bounces." She kept this up con-
 tinuously while the men jumped and walked back-
 ward to their former positions three times. The
 whole performance lasted no more than ten
 minutes at the utmost, yet it could not be re-
 peated under any circumstances until the follow-
 ing year. For this reason it was particularly
 admired, and urgent demands for repetition from
 the onlookers, with consequent refusals from
 the dancers, seem to have been a traditional
 part of the affair. If the spectacle were to
 be witnessed again that season, it would have
 to be in some other village or tribe with other
 dancers.

[573] When J.P. was young he saw a Bear dancer
 whose arms and legs were entirely black. Spec-
 tators said to him, "If you are a bear, let's
 see your hair!" At once the black portions
 turned into hair all over the man's limbs.

796 The dance was supposed to be a replica of
 825 real bears' antics; they were said often "to
 dance with trees."

A man was out hunting once about sundown
 and saw a little bear dancing beside a small
 oak tree. He was standing on his hind legs
 and holding up his paws; he jumped at the tree
 three times. Then he clawed up some earth and
 threw it at the little tree. The tree was his
 singer and the little bear was mad because the
 singer made a mistake. The human dancers act
 just the same way (not toward their singer,
 however) and will not look back over their
 shoulders until they are through.

J.B. gave a similar anecdote.

His wife, her sister, and her cousin were
 out gathering seeds. They saw a bear dance.
 He was near a little white oak which they be-
 lieved was his singer. He jumped and grunted
 three times, then he grabbed at the tree and
 playfully mauled it. Three times he did this
 and then went off. The women were much pleased
 at the spectacle.

2 [in the Bear Dance. - Ambly]

[P. 131b] Wukchumni

769 people who wanted their doctors to make money
756 could have them go into this fight if they
789 liked."

769 The Huhuna Dance, J.B. said, was seen only
at mourning ceremonies at Lemore, Porterville,
and Lemon Cove [that is, Tachi, Yaudanchi, and
Wukchumni]. It was danced in the afternoon to-
535 ward the end of the week, on Thursday or Friday.
The most noted Huhuna dancer was Camfusan, a
Yaudanchi; a Choinimni named Ho't:s was also a
Huhuna dancer. His costume consisted of a long
feather-covered dress, and he had pieces of
abalone shells (tu'dtud) fastened over his eyes
[on the net headgear, presumably]. Under his
left arm hung a skin purse in which he put the
money he found.

After he had given the usual exhibition of
money-finding, his winatum would tell him he
was to be killed. The shaman chosen for this
task was usually Cokoni:k, although J.B. had
seen Ma'mu, a "Southerner" do it also. The
shaman made airshot at a fire and knocked
Huhuna unconscious. Two winatums carried him
aside, then the shaman would restore him. For
this spectacle both Huhuna and the shaman were
paid by the host [mourning] tribe.

769 The last, or Saturday, night of the cere-
mony the burning of images took place. This
was called shana n:t. Only the hosts took part;
the visitors looked on. A large fire burned in
the center of the dance space. The chief,

[48] mourning families, and others proceeded around
it (anticlockwise) in a long file, stepping
high and stamping. Women of the mourning
families carried the effigies of the dead
(woi'dow:s) while both men and women carried
long poles to which were affixed baskets and
beads for the visitors. The poles were carried

• [198] in one hand while the other hand patted the
mouth to produce a long ululation, long and
doleful rather than staccato, and the poles
were waved in the air. At the end of the

[184] second circuit of the fire the mourners cast
the effigies on the fire. At the same time the
poles were thrown to the visitors who scrambled
for the money and treasures; this part of the
ritual was called ka'mits. This custom of
tossing the poles was followed by Wukchumni,
Telamni, Gawia, Yokod, and Yaudanchi, whereas
the Mill Creek people (Choinimni and Western
Mono) kept the poles until the time of the
ritual washing when the gifts were presented to
the washers.

GHOST DANCE OF 1870

177 The introduction of the Ghost Dance was
668 attributed by J.B. to Joi'joi, a Mono man, "a
796 Holloma maybe," from the northeast.²² "He went
[Text continues on p. 133]

²²The course of the Ghost Dance of 1870 among Yokuts
and Western Mono has been described previously (Gayton,
Ghost Dance of 1870).

[P. 147b] Choinimni

OCCASION

482 ally a basket cap was worn under the tumpline
[854] to ease the pressure, as was sometimes done
when carrying a heavy child in a cradle.¹¹

534 Musical instruments.--The elderwood flute
(u'tač) had four holes. Not many men could
play it; P.D.W. thought one had to dream about
it to become really adept. Two Choinimni ex-
perts at Kulušao were Kudu'ma and La'hai'yi.
[237] Samson Dick (Ya'ki) is the only person living
now who can play well.¹² The hawk shinbone
whistle (pu'sač) was held in the mouth while
the musician executed dance steps. This kind
of whistling is called wušinuha'o, the term
applied to ordinary (European) whistling with
pursed lips. The elderwood clapper (ta'wal)
was used for most ceremonial accompaniments,
the cocoon rattle (sa'hač) being reserved ex-
clusively for doctor's shamanistic dancing and
for the Bear Dance.

Beating upon a hollow log is reported by
Mayfield.

302 A short musical bow, twanged upon while
[198] one end was held in the mouth, was heard by
Mayfield. Whistling, he said, was used only
for signaling.¹³

533 The singers who accompanied dancing were
called ale'k'č; the act of singing, or songs,
s'ikaš.

302 Paint.--White paint (ho'sot) was a clay
386 "dug up in the swamps around here" (i.e., at
[439] the edge of the foothills toward Centerville).
Red paint (hu'iyu) was got in trade from the
Eastern Mono. Black paint (wa'wen) was of un-
known source. All these paints were lumpy; in
preparation they were ground or rubbed down on
a rock, then mixed with grease and applied with
the fingers. P.D.W. insists that there were no
distinctive totemic paint patterns. White
paint, crudely smeared, was worn on a doctor's
arms and body when he was dancing.

276 Pipes.--A pipe of wood (elderwood) was
called a'tsi. P.D.W.'s pipe, the typical
Yokuts pipe, was about 3 inches long, about
5/16 of an inch in diameter at the base and
1/2 inch at the outer end. The hollowing for
the "bowl" was about 1/4 inch in diameter, and
held but a small pinch of tobacco. Only one or
two puffs were taken, perhaps twice a day. A
pipe of clay was called sa'kmai; these were not
common.¹⁴ The other common form, comparable to
the wood pipe, was called si'k'il (cane) from
the cane which was obtained for this and for
arrow-making from the Aiticha; no cane grew up
in the hills, said P.D.W. The cane pipe was
3-6 inches long and was often carried behind

¹¹Ibid., 23, 40.

[578] ¹²This man, who was at outs with most of his neighbors
at Dunlap in 1927, refused repeated requests to become an
informant. Other Indians apologized for his unwillingness,
although his refusals were made with the greatest tact.

¹³Letts, op. cit., 25.

¹⁴Mayfield claimed he had seen no clay or stone pipes
of the Choinimni (ibid., 21).

the rite in order that none of the people might be bitten during the ensuing year. Proceeding in a procession to a rattlesnake den, they stamped and whistled before it, the head shaman directly facing the hole, the others on the sides to cut off the return of such snakes as might falter at the impending ordeal. ⁷⁹⁶ ⁷⁵⁶ [787]

Soon, it is said, the snakes would emerge, usually preceded, it was believed, by a large lizard, and, drawn on by the leading shaman, they crawled straight to his feet, where they buried themselves in a winnowing basket filled with eagle down. Each medicine man in turn pointed out the snake he considered his, distracted its attention by swinging his *wachom* or hand-feathers, seized it, and carried it off in a sack. The worst snake of the lot was left for the head "doctor." [65]

In the evening the tribe gathered under the inevitable shade. While the singers chanted particular melodies to the accompaniment of cocoon rattles the snake shamans walked about whistling, each with his death-bearing sack. They wore down-filled head nets and were painted in alternate horizontal stripes of white and red drawn across the body and limbs. From time to time they placed their bags on the heads of spectators, declaring that thus they determined who was subject to snake bite during the year. [198] • [302]

On the following day these prospective victims of the serpents are cured in anticipation in order to prevent their being bitten. Although their infection is entirely imaginary and future, it is treated by the snake shamans by their usual medical means of sucking. The doctors even profess to extract from the not yet existing wound the actual poison—usually a rat's tail or tooth or a small snake—which has already been injected into the body by the future piercing of the skin by the rattlesnake's fangs. This is certainly magic with a vengeance; and it is difficult to imagine a logic of causality more in conflict with our own. [1755]

This precaution for the health of the community having been taken, the snake shamans display their powers to the multitude. They play with the snakes, throw them about, tease them to anger, allow them to bite themselves, and even hold them out hanging by their fangs from the thumb or hand.

The *kuyohoch* or "shaman killers"—in California the doctor is also potentially a nefarious wizard—then appear. Pretending to be trying to shoot the rattlesnake shamans, they make these beg for their lives and pay ransom for being spared.

The last act of the ceremony, the "stepping" itself, is also costly to the shamans, who, far from exploiting the community through their powers, as we might anticipate, are forced to accumulate much property in order to pass through the rite. The rattlesnakes are now

"But Pusiilin already got one hundred dollars silver pay,¹⁵⁹ so he go 'head anyway. Them Uhdukut snake doctors got to⁷⁵⁶ pay Pusiilin that money. It take almost all money them doctors⁷⁹⁶ got from doctorin' them people. But they got to pay him any-way to show they can sure cure snake bite. Chechin tell Pusiilin, 'Well, you goin' to die tonight'. Pusiilin squeeze that snake head and throw it on the ground. It strike him on both hands. Then that Uhdukut take his snake and put it back in his Tawits basket. Then Pusiilin fall down.

"Two Uhdukut doctors take Pusiilin to his bed where that¹⁵⁹ squirrel fall. They begin to doctor him. They work on him all⁷⁵⁵ night. They tie one *piasin*, eagle down string, around each⁷⁹⁶ arm below his shoulder. Then doctors have all them people yell so Pusiilin can't go to sleep and die. About sun-up Pusiilin get better, so all them people stop yellin'. But Pusiilin lost one finger that rattlesnake bit."

Tawpna, an aged Wukchumne, saw six rattlesnake¹⁵⁹ dances. His story verifies those of Ichow and Pohut and adds⁷⁵⁶ a few details which are related below:⁷⁹⁶

"When them Wukchumne snake doctors get ready for that rattlesnake dance they paint their faces. They paint white^[302] and red stripes across faces. They put three red and three white stripes on each cheek. Some tribe doctors paint stripes across arms, chest, too.

"When that dance all over, them people don't get snake-bit all summer. If Indian man hunt deer, rattlesnake won't bite him. If Indian woman gather seeds, rattlesnake won't bite 'em. If rattlesnake do bite 'em, them Indian snake doctor got to cure 'em free.

"Them Indian snake doctors keep snakes in *awsuh* [bottle-necked stitched baskets]. When they first catch snakes they put 'em in *chawmish* [blackberry gathering twined basket]. I see that all time. I know that's right."

As this manuscript is being completed there is one Yokuts⁷⁵⁶ man living who attended the rattlesnake dances and who re-⁷⁹⁶members how they were conducted. He is *Wahumchah*, a¹⁹⁸ *Yowlumne*. He adds to the foregoing descriptions the rattle-snake doctor's song. This song is about a rattlesnake who is crawling on the ground and looking up at a magpie nest in a tree. He wants to eat the young birds in the nest, but he cannot climb the tree. *Wahumchah* has explained that the Yokuts^[533] songs do not have the same words as the rest of the language.^{192]}

756 He says, "Them Indian Doctor don't want them people to
796 know what he singin'. So he fix he's own word so they don't
199 understand 'em."

This is a wonderful example of the common behavior of all men. Until late historic times did not the legal profession practice in Latin? And until recently did not all doctors of medicine write their prescriptions in latin for the identical reason as did those primitive Yokuts medicine men. Following is the song, together with the interpretation given by Wahumchah:

539

O, Chochin witche pah
(There is a bird's children)
O, Chochine miah wiche pah
(Oh bird, I want your children)
O, Chochine miah witche pah
O, Chochine miah witche pah
O, Chochine miah witche pah
O, Chochin witche pah
O, Yoe hete ketre ehe dinne
(Poor rattlesnake)
Kiowki nowu utu sudongtow
(I am looking in the tree)
O, Chochine miah witche pah
Yah weah ----- yah!
(Everyone hear me).